

Ditch the Flick: Queensland Country Bank Stadium

Background

The team at Tangaroa Blue Foundation and the Queensland Country Bank Stadium (QCBS) have teamed up to present the “Ditch the Flick” project around the perimeter of QCBS. The project plans to reduce the amount of cigarette butts littered during major sporting events, by providing the public with Designated Outdoor Smoking Areas (DOSAs) and specialised butt bins for the proper means of disposal. Whilst the majority of a cigarette is “biodegradable” what many are unaware of is the fact that the butt/filter is made of plastic. Small plastic remnants, such as those from degrading cigarette butts are an issue within the marine environment, with particular focus on marine birds whom mistake the debris as viable food for their offspring. Queensland Country Bank Stadium grounds directly back onto the Ross River, meaning that littered debris items can readily enter the marine environment following strong winds or heavy rainfall.

The initial phase of the project was to determine suitable sites for DOSAs based on identification of cigarette litter hotspots. Following the installation of the DOSAs and the specialised butt bins debris audits and observational studies will be conducted to determine the success of their location, or whether they should be moved in future to other locations. It also allows the data to determine whether or not more bins should be fixed to a certain location due to the demand from the public.

Phase 1: Identification of Cigarette Litter Hotspots

Visitor Numbers at the Stadium

- Gate A: 10,000pax
- Gate D/E: 12,000pax
- Gate G: 3,000pax
- Total Capacity: 25,000pax

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Figure 1 - Map of Queensland Country Bank Stadium demonstrating where the entrance/exit gates are located.

Prior to the beginning of the National Rugby League (NRL) 2021 season the team at Tangaroa Blue Foundation conducted baseline cigarette butt surveys around the perimeter of Queensland Country Bank Stadium to identify remnant hotspots. A CyberTracker device was used to complete the audits to determine exact GPS locations of cigarette litter. This data was then used to compile heatmaps based on the debris load of cigarette butts at each pinpointed location.

A total of two baselines audits were conducted around the perimeter of Queensland Country Bank Stadium. One of the 9th of November 2020 and the other on the 27th of January 2021. A grand total of 1,739 cigarette butts and filters were collected during the baseline audits (1,150 and 589 respectively). Based on the heatmaps produced it was identified that DOSAs were required near each entrance/exit gate to the stadium due to the large amount of cigarette litter found around these areas when compared to the other areas around the perimeter of QCBS.

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Queensland Country Bank Stadium
Cigarette Butt Survey Results
09/11/2020



Queensland Country Bank Stadium
Cigarette Butt Survey Results
27/1/21



Figure 2 – Heatmaps indicating the baseline cigarette butt and filter audit results at Queensland Country Bank Stadium

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The 2021 NRL season at Queensland Country Bank Stadium kicked off with the NRL All Stars: Indigenous vs Māori game on the 20th February 2021. A total of 6 specially designed butt bins were temporarily installed for this game; 2 on the grassy section in front of Gates D/E, 1 near the staff entry door between Gates E and G, 1 in the compound area in front of Gate G, and 2 on the concrete area in front of Gate A. The data from this game was used to determine whether these highlighted hotspots from the baseline audits were suitable to install more permanent DOSAs at QCBS. The same hotspots of cigarette litter were identified based on the before and after audit heatmap results from the NRL All Stars: Indigenous vs Māori game.

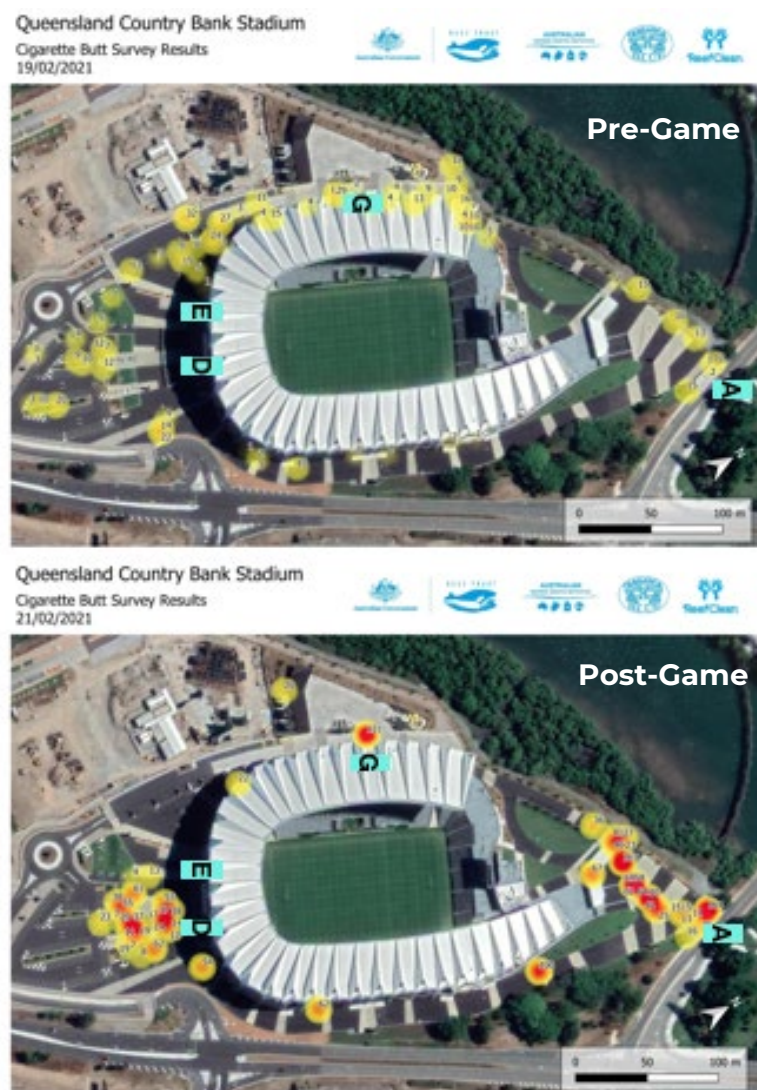


Figure 3 - Heatmaps indicating the pre- and post-game cigarette butt and filter audit results from the NRL All Stars: Indigenous vs Māori game held at Queensland Country Bank Stadium

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Phase 2: Installation of the DOSAs and Creation of DOSA Set-Up Manual for Queensland Country Bank Stadium Staff

In accordance with the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 (QLD)* it is not a state requirement for venues to provide a Designated Outdoor Smoking Area (DOSA). In fact, under this state legislation it is a requirement within all stadiums in Queensland to be smoke free, with the implementation of DOSA's at the venue manager's discretion. Based on recent quantitative and observational studies conducted at Queensland Country Bank Stadium during the NRL All Stars: Indigenous vs Māori event, it is highly recommended that effective DOSA's be implemented in order to provide source reduction of littered cigarette butts.

Currently every other major sports facility (as declared under the *Major Sports Facilities Act 2001 (QLD)*) or major events facility (as declared under the *Major Events Act 2014 (QLD)*) within Queensland has established at least one DOSA for the stadium/arena. Stated earlier was the fact that under state legislation smoking is prohibited *within* any major sports or event facility (inclusive of any small external buildings such as toilet blocks within the perimeter). However, external to the perimeter of the facility smoking is permissible where designated by venue management provided the DOSA does not breach any of the state laws around smoke-free zones.

As of the 1st September 2016 new laws were implemented regarding smoke-free buffer zones. Therefore, in order to comply with state legislation, it is compulsory that smoking is banned at public transport waiting points (for example the bus waiting bay at QCBS near Gate D) and a 5m buffer zone for any DOSA is established from this point. According to state law this 5m buffer zone extends to the queue, and therefore a patron who is smoking whilst in queue for said public transport waiting point is now in breach for non-compliance. It is also stated that smoking is banned within 5m of a non-residential building entrance (this would include the entry/exit gates at QCBS). State legislation also dictates that no food or drink products are to be sold, and no food is to be consumed within a DOSA.

Currently major sports and event facilities within Queensland have established their DOSA's based on these current legislative requirements, which in turn means all are external to the perimeter. Venues should display no smoking signage to advise patrons that smoking is prohibited and that fines apply for smoking outside of a DOSA. At present the fine for non-compliance within the state could be up to a \$243.80 on-the-spot fine, with offenders prohibited from re-

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entering the facility at the discretion of venue management. Under the *Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 (QLD)* it states that the patron can be directed not to smoke in an area by an employee/agent of the facility or an authorised person. According to Stadiums Queensland, Queensland Health Environmental Officers are responsible for enforcing any on-the-spot fines for non-compliance.

A systematic review (Zhou *et al.*, 2016) uncovered that previous studies had indicated that places without convenient DOSAs resulted in an increased non-compliance from smokers, meaning they would choose to smoke in non-smoking areas. It was suggested that the most effective DOSA was one with appropriate signage and was safe and conveniently located. These results were taken into consideration when determining suitable locations for DOSA's around Queensland Country Bank Stadium, along with the results from the previous audits completed.



Figure 4 - Red squares indicate the locations of the DOSAs at Queensland Country Bank Stadium

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Aside from the previously mentioned 6 specifically designed butt bins, multiple other assets were created by the Tangaroa Blue Foundation under the ReefClean initiative for the Ditch the Flick source reduction plan at Queensland Country Bank Stadium. These were inclusive of;

- 6 x Ditch the Flick A-frame signs
- 3 x Ditch the Flick flags
- 1 x co-branded DOSA Set-Up Manual
- 4 x Ditch the Flick collection buckets

Coupled with these assets, Queensland Country Bank Stadium developed multiple No Smoking A-frames which were placed in numerous locations around the perimeter of QCBS.



Figure 5 - No Smoking A-frame at Queensland Country Bank Stadium with volunteer Litter Heroes from Tangaroa Blue Foundation in the background

The team at the Tangaroa Blue Foundation trialed the DOSA installation procedure up until the fourth game at QCBS. After this the co-branded DOSA Set-Up Manual created for QCBS staff to follow was finalised and the installation process was handed over. The following section describes the content found within the document.

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DOSA Set-Up Manual

As per Queensland Health regulations the DOSA cannot be considered an enclosed body, therefore there must be an opening to indicate an entry/exit at either side of the DOSA. If the DOSA were to be enclosed with only one opening it would be required to have a COVID check-in system. All DOSAs must be 5m from the entrance to any gate and also 5m from any public transport queue.

DOSA near Gate A

Equipment List

- 12 x Bollards with weight plates
- Approximately 30m of rope with fluorescent flags
- 3 x Ditch the Flick A-Frame signs
- 1 x Ditch the Flick flag
- Extra weight plate for the base of the Ditch the Flick flag
- 2 x Butt Bins

Set-up Instructions

1. Collect buggy and all equipment listed above.
2. Once at the location of the DOSA (the grass patch to the left of Gate A if you are facing the stadium) unload all of the equipment.
3. Place the 12 bollards and associated weight plate in a circular shape approximately 1.5m apart from each other, with a 2m opening between bollards indicative of the entrance/exit at the back of the DOSA and also at the front of the DOSA.
4. Connect the bollards (excluding the openings) to mark out the DOSA by using the rope with flags. These can easily be wrapped and tied around the tops of the bollards (NB. It is a health and safety risk to have any loose ends so please make sure these are trimmed or tucked in).
5. Place the 2 butt bins inside the DOSA.
6. Assemble Ditch the Flick flag (NB. The flag pole already has a black weight plate at the bottom, which serves as the stand). Place additional weight plate on top of existing flag weight plate to ensure stability.
7. Place Ditch the Flick flag on the outer skirts of the DOSA, preferably on the grassy patch to the left of the front opening.
8. Place the 3 Ditch the Flick A-Frame signs along the spectator walkway, with arrows pointing towards the DOSA.

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Figure 6 - Location of DOSA near Gate A (red oval)



Figure 7 - Indication of set-up of DOSA at Gate A. Yellow ovals demonstrate the openings to the front of the DOSA close to the exit of Gate A, and also the opening at the rear of the DOSA.

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Figure 8 - Location of Ditch the Flick A-Frame signs (yellow ovals) associated with DOSA at Gate A (red oval)

DOSA in front of Gate G

Equipment List

- 8 x Bollards with weight plates
- Approximately 15m of rope with fluorescent flags
- 1 x Ditch the Flick A-Frame signs
- 1 x Ditch the Flick flag
- Extra weight plate for the base of the Ditch the Flick flag
- 1 x Butt Bins

Set-up Instructions

1. Collect buggy and all equipment listed above.
2. Once at the location of the DOSA (concreted area just in front of Gate G) unload all of the equipment.
3. Place the 8 bollards and associated weight plate in a rectangular shape approximately 1.5m apart from each other, with a 2m opening between bollards indicative of the entrance/exit at the back of the DOSA and also at the front of the DOSA.
4. Connect the bollards (excluding the openings) to mark out the DOSA by using the rope with flags. These can easily be wrapped and tied around the tops of the bollards (NB. It is a health and safety risk to have any loose ends so please make sure these are trimmed or tucked in).

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5. Place the 1 butt bin inside the centre of the DOSA.
6. Assemble Ditch the Flick flag (NB. The flag pole already has a black weight plate at the bottom, which serves as the stand). Place additional weight plate on top of existing flag weight plate to ensure stability.
7. Place Ditch the Flick flag on the outer skirts of the DOSA, to the left of the front opening.
8. Place the Ditch the Flick A-Frame signs along the spectator walkway, with arrows pointing towards the DOSA.

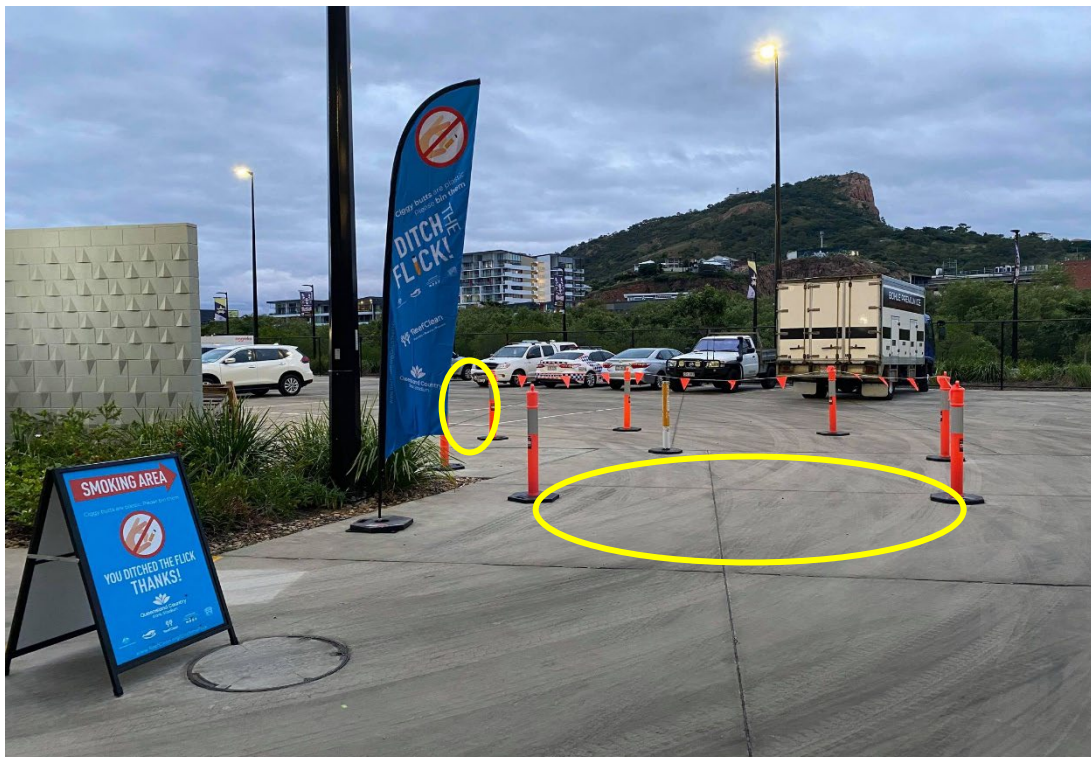


Figure 9 - Indication of set-up of DOSA at Gate G. Yellow ovals demonstrate the openings to the front of the DOSA close to the exit of Gate G, and also the opening at the rear of the DOSA.

DOSA in front of Gate D/E

Equipment List

- 10 x Bollards with weight plates
- Approximately 30m of rope with fluorescent flags
- 2 x Ditch the Flick A-Frame signs
- 1 x Ditch the Flick flag
- Extra weight plate for the base of the Ditch the Flick flag
- 2 x Butt Bins

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Set-up Instructions

1. Collect buggy and all equipment listed above.
2. Once at the location of the DOSA (the grass patch to the front of Gate D/E) unload all of the equipment.
3. Place the 10 bollards and associated weight plate in a rectangular shape approximately 1m apart from each other, with a 2m opening between bollards indicative of the entrance/exit at the front of the DOSA. For this DOSA the back can remain completely open.
4. Connect the bollards (excluding the openings) to mark out the DOSA by using the rope with flags. These can easily be wrapped and tied around the tops of the bollards (NB. It is a health and safety risk to have any loose ends so please make sure these are trimmed or tucked in).
5. Place the 2 butt bins inside the DOSA. Attempt to spread them out within the DOSA to encourage proper use.
6. Assemble Ditch the Flick flag (NB. The flag pole already has a black weight plate at the bottom, which serves as the stand). Place additional weight plate on top of existing flag weight plate to ensure stability.
7. Place Ditch the Flick flag on the outer skirts of the DOSA, preferably on the grassy patch in the front right-hand corner of the DOSA.
8. Place the 2 Ditch the Flick A-Frame signs along the spectator walkway, with arrows pointing towards the DOSA.



Figure 10 - Location of Ditch the Flick A-Frame signs (yellow ovals) associated with DOSA at Gate D/E (red oval).

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Extra Weight Plate for structural support of Ditch the Flick flag

Figure 11 - Indication of set-up of DOSA at Gate D/E. Yellow oval demonstrates the opening to the front of the DOSA directly in front of Gate D/E. Figure demonstrates the open back of this DOSA.

Phase 3: Post DOSA Installation Cigarette Litter Audits

Since the installation of the DOSAs the team at Tangaroa Blue Foundation successfully completed pre, during and post event cigarette litter audits at Queensland Country Bank Stadium for a total of 5 games;

- Cowboys vs Dragons – Saturday 20th March
- Cowboys vs Titans – Sunday 28th March
- Cowboys vs Bulldogs – Sunday 18th April
- Cowboys vs Broncos – Saturday 8th May
- Cowboys vs Roosters – Saturday 17th July

Due to poor weather conditions on the night of the event only pre and post event cigarette litter audits were conducted for the first game;

- All Stars: Indigenous vs Māori – Saturday 20th February

Pre event audits were conducted to ensure that any remnant cigarette litter was removed from the perimeter of QCBS to allow for an accurate representation of the accumulation of this type of litter as a direct result of the monitored event. A CyberTracker device was used during the collection of the post event cigarette litter audits to allow the team at Tangaroa Blue Foundation to monitor the effectiveness of the DOSA locations.

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Even though the DOSAs were not established for the NRL All Stars: Indigenous vs Māori game, the specially designed butt bins were provided. The use of them was not particularly insisted on by spectators until the implementation of the DOSAs occurred for the following games. This is quite clear when comparing the heatmaps from all post event cigarette litter surveys conducted at QCBS, by the visible even spread of litter around the perimeter rather than apparent hotspots.

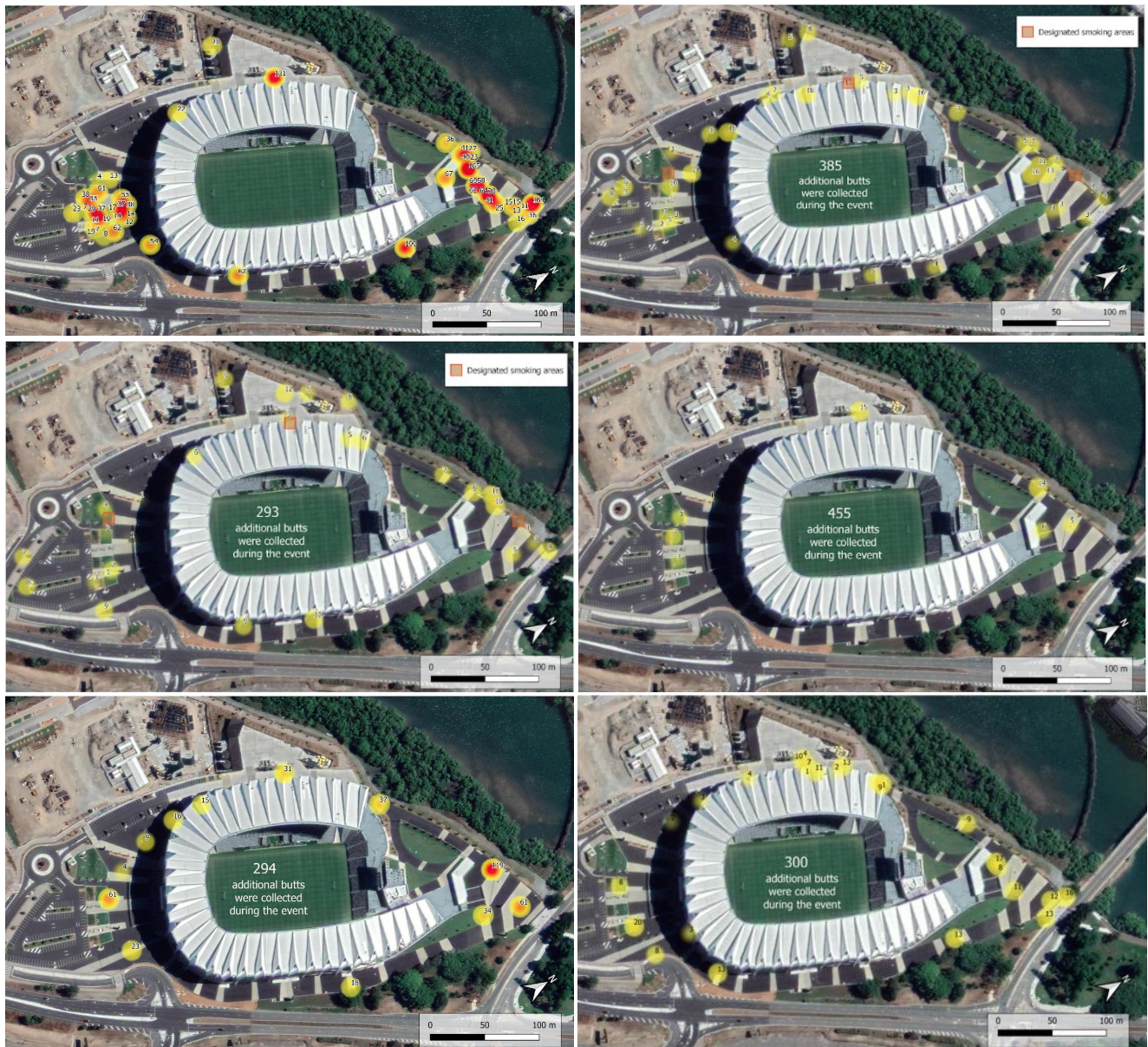


Figure 12 - Heatmaps indicating the post-game cigarette butt and filter audit results at Queensland Country Bank Stadium for the NRL All Stars: Indigenous vs Māori (top left), Cowboys vs Dragons (top right), Cowboys vs Titans (middle left), Cowboys vs Bulldogs (middle right), Cowboys vs Broncos (bottom left) and Cowboys vs Roosters (bottom right) games

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There was a significant reduction in the amount of cigarette butt and filter litter at every game when compared to the pre-implementation of the Designated Outdoor Smoking Areas (DOSAs). This reduction varied anywhere from 68 to 79% over the following 5 games when comparing to the pre DOSA game (Game 1 – NRL All Stars: Indigenous vs Māori). When comparing as a per capita figure, the Ditch the Flick project managed to accomplish on average a 66% reduction in cigarette butt and filter litter at Queensland Country Bank Stadium since the implementation of the DOSAs, with very promising results at the end demonstrating a 70% reduction.

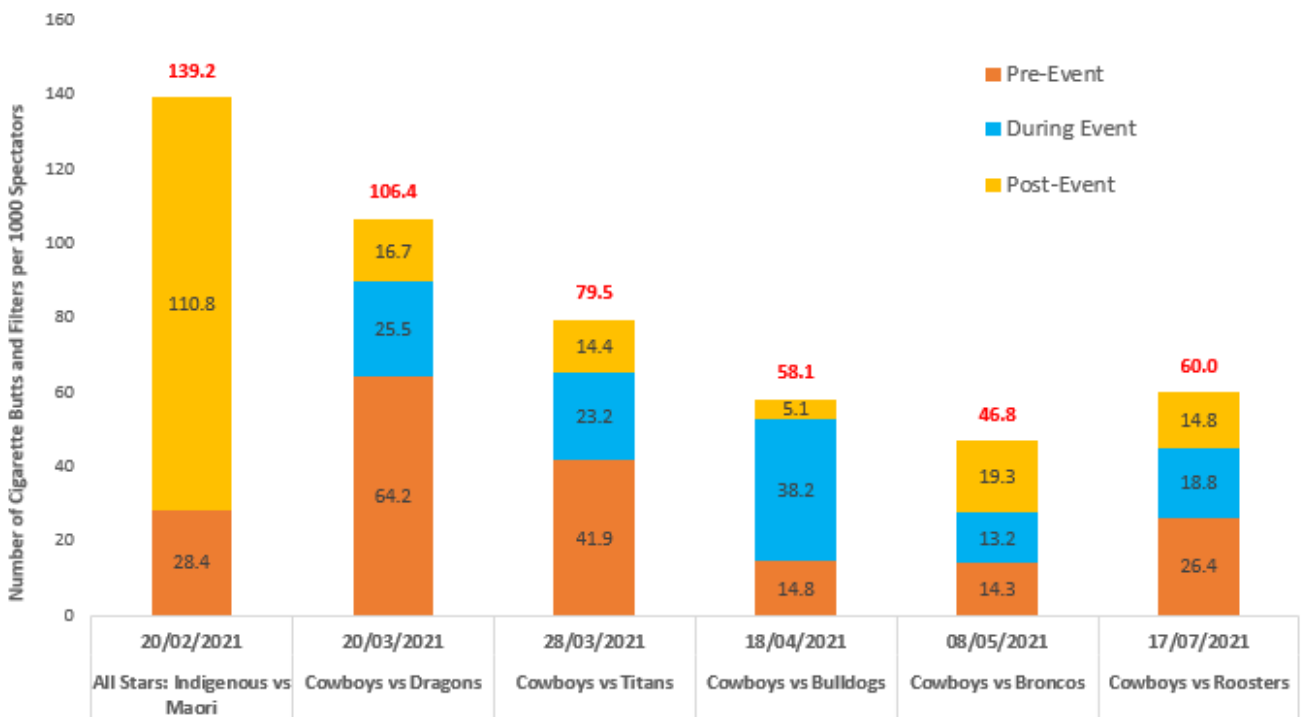


Figure 13 - Number of cigarette butts and filters collected pre, during and post event at Queensland Country Bank Stadium per 1000 spectators present during the event

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Table 1 – Comparison of pre and post DOSA implementation per capita cigarette litter collected as a result of an event at Queensland Country Bank Stadium

| Game Details | | Number of Spectators | Cigarette Butts and Filters | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------------|--|----------------------------|---|---|
| | | | Total Number of Cigarette Butts and Filters* | Total per 1,000 Spectators | Gross Percent Difference (compared to Game 1) | Percent Difference per Spectator (compared to Game 1) |
| All Stars: Indigenous vs Maori | 20/02/2021 | 20,206 | 2,239 | 110.8 | | |
| Cowboys vs Dragons | 20/03/2021 | 15,120 | 638 | 42.2 | 71.5% | 61.9% |
| Cowboys vs Titans | 28/03/2021 | 12,612 | 475 | 37.7 | 78.8% | 66.0% |
| Cowboys vs Bulldogs | 18/04/2021 | 11,965 | 518 | 43.3 | 76.9% | 60.9% |
| Cowboys vs Broncos | 8/05/2021 | 22,222 | 722 | 32.5 | 67.8% | 70.7% |
| Cowboys vs Roosters | 17/07/2021 | 15,933 | 536 | 33.6 | 76.1% | 69.6% |
| | | | | Average | 74.2% | 65.8% |

*Total number of cigarette butts and filters as a result of the event (this data does not include items collected during the pre-event audit)

Phase 4: Observational Studies

Observational studies were conducted at the stadium for all 6 of the events. Team members from the Tangaroa Blue Foundation dressed in civilian clothes and observed spectator behaviour both in and out of the Designated Outdoor Smoking Areas (DOSAs) for a 15 minute interval. The spectators gender was noted along with their method of cigarette disposal, which was categorised as “butt bin”, “bin” or “flick” disposal. The butt bins refer to the specifically designed and implemented bins for the Ditch the Flick project, where as a bin refers to a general waste bin. Both of these methods are considered correct disposal methods, when compared to the incorrect disposal method of “flick” on the ground.

Comparison of Pre- and Post- DOSA Set-Up

Since the DOSAs were not implemented for the NRL All Stars: Indigenous vs Māori to successfully compare the success of the DOSAs for butt bin usage the 5 Cowboys games are the totals of observations both inside and outside the DOSA.

The successful use of the specially designed butt bins is particularly highlighted within the DOSA near Gate A. The incorrect disposal (“Flick”) of cigarette butts was a particular problem for spectators during the All Stars game, with a dramatic

increase in the use of the mobile butt bins after the implementation of the DOSAs in the following games.

Despite the presence of the butt bins prior to the implementation of DOSAs there was an overall increase of 100% in butt bin usage after the DOSA implementation around Gate A. Coupled with this positive result was an overall 36% decrease in the incorrect disposal method (“Flicking”). The Cowboys vs Broncos resulted in a large number of spectators incorrectly disposing of their cigarette butts, however it is speculated that this is due to the sheer volume of attendees at this game, resulting in an increased effort required by spectators to navigate through to the nearest disposal unit.

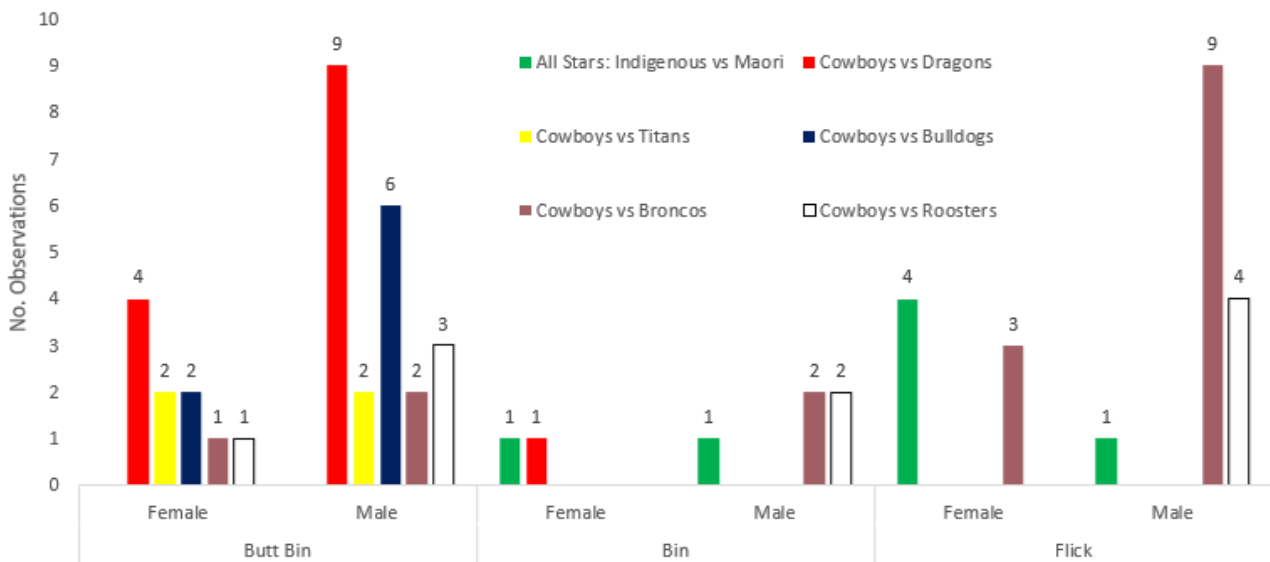


Figure 14 - Observational studies indicating spectators disposal methods of their cigarette butts around Gate A prior to events at Queensland Country Bank Stadium

Despite the presence of the butt bins prior to the implementation of DOSAs there was an overall increase of 70% in butt bin usage after the DOSA implementation around Gate D/E. Coupled with this positive result was an overall 97% decrease in the incorrect disposal method (“Flicking”).

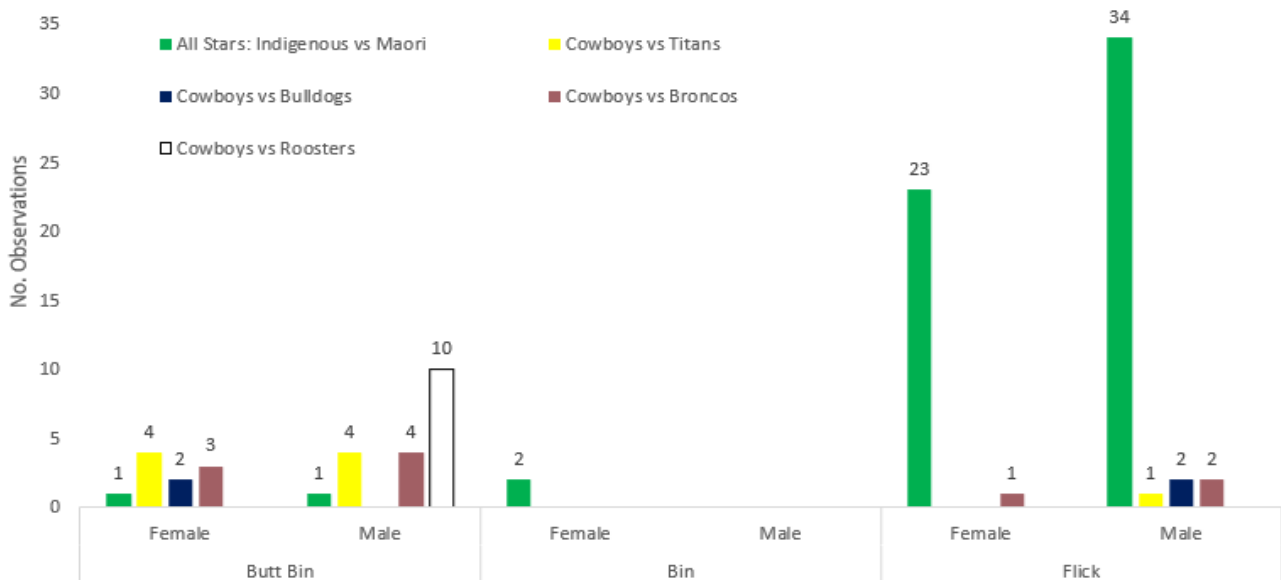


Figure 15 - Observational studies indicating spectators disposal methods of their cigarette butts around Gate D/E prior to events at Queensland Country Bank Stadium

Comparison of Post- DOSA Set-Up

During the half-time observational studies, it was found that more spectators are likely to do the wrong thing, due to the added pressure of time management (half-time is only a 20 minute break). It has been found that more spectators will participate in smoking within the earliest convenient space, which has resulted in less than half (48%) of the spectators observed smoking within the DOSA. Since there are no butt bins provided external to the DOSA this has resulted in an overall significant increase (39%) in the incorrect disposal of cigarette butts (referred to as "Flick"). However, with this being said, the observational studies highlight that the majority (93%) of spectators who chose to smoke within the DOSA did dispose of their cigarette butt correctly by using the butt bins provided. Despite choosing to smoke outside of the DOSA 33% of those spectators successfully disposed of their cigarette butts correctly, either in a butt bin or a standard bin.

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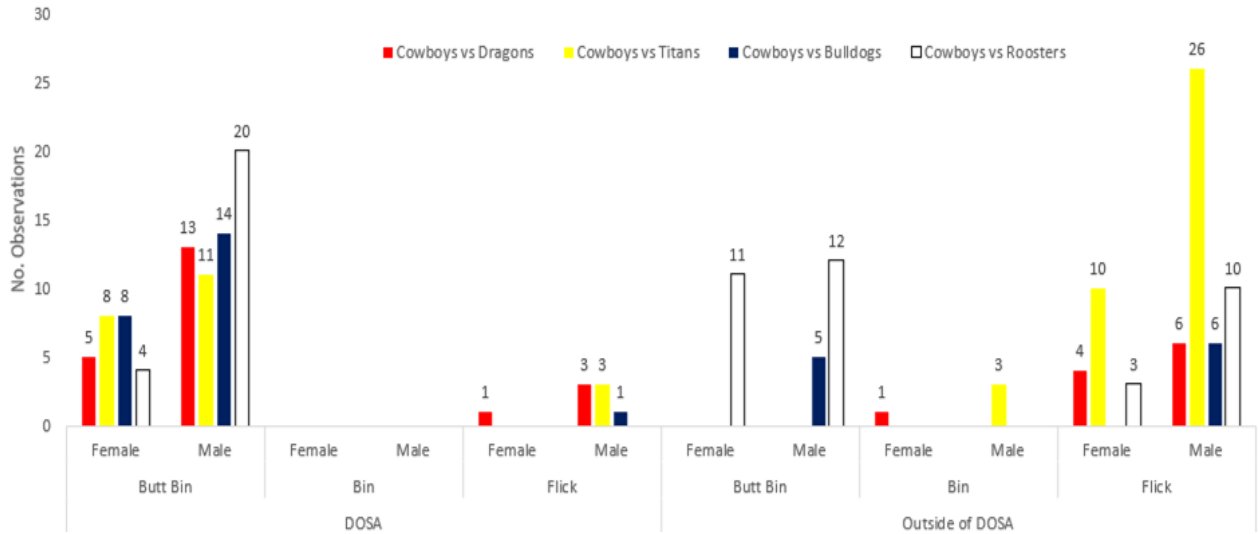


Figure 16 - Observational studies indicating spectators disposal methods of their cigarette butts around Gate A during the half time break of events at Queensland Country Bank Stadium

During the pre-game audits the number of people smoking during the 15 minute observational period is limited, however it is clear that the implementation of the butt bins within the DOSA has resulted in successful disposal of cigarette butts by spectators. Overall compliance rate of butt bin usage within the DOSA was 91%, with the level of non-compliance through incorrect disposal (“Flicking”) a mere 30% overall. Approximately 66% of spectators observed during the study proceeded to smoke within the DOSA. Despite choosing to smoke outside of the DOSA 27% of those spectators successfully disposed of their cigarette butts correctly, either in a butt bin or a standard bin.

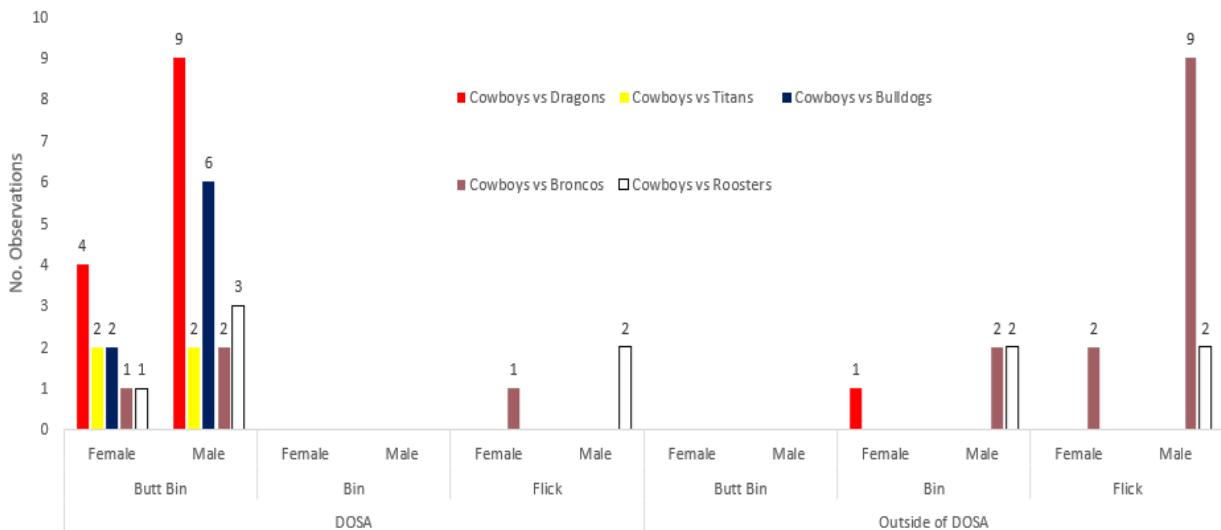


Figure 17 - Observational studies indicating spectators disposal methods of their cigarette butts around Gate A prior to events at Queensland Country Bank Stadium

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Phase 5: Extension of Ditch the Flick Data Through the Litter Hero Project

From the Ditch the Flick project the Litter Hero project emerged, which turned a focus to reducing all debris at Queensland Country Bank Stadium during events. Large events often result in excess litter within an area, and given that the stadium backs onto the Ross River and has multiple drainage systems a higher potential for debris entering the marine environment was recognised.

The Litter Hero team focuses on collecting all debris within the external perimeter of the stadium over a 2-3 hour period (or until a whole lap around the stadium). The area covered is inclusive of; the concrete pathways, surrounding vegetation and garden beds, and also the DOSAs. The team revisit the DOSAs after the half-time period is completed to ensure any cigarette butts that were not disposed of properly whilst spectators were using them are removed from the environment.

Alongside the direct impact of rubbish removal, the Litter Hero team also focus on educating the public at the stadium. The mere presence of having a team each event collecting the debris from the grounds whilst wearing the branded high visibility 'Litter Hero volunteer' vests and carrying around the litter collection buckets with Ditch the Flick and Litter Hero branding often leads to many positive discussions with spectators. This presence could potentially alter the behavioural decisions made by those who were once repeat littering offenders.

The Litter Hero team successfully collected debris items during a total of 18 events at Queensland Country Bank Stadium. All debris collected was audited and entered into the Australian Marine Debris Initiative (AMDI) Database.



Figure 18 - Litter Hero team member, Brett Tait, showing off his skills of debris collection, high visibility Litter Hero branded vest and debris bucket during one of the rounds at Queensland Country Bank Stadium

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Despite a successful first year for the “Ditch the Flick” source reduction plan at Queensland Country Bank Stadium, cigarette butts and filters still remain the highest recorded debris item during the Litter Hero audits. However, with this in mind since the implementation of the Designated Outdoor Smoking Areas (DOSAs) in March there has been a significant decrease in the amount of cigarette litter per capita during the 2021 NRL season at Queensland Country Bank Stadium. The large spike during the month of June has been attributed to a dramatic increase in stadium spectators due to QCBS hosting a number of Special Event Rugby League Games, such as the State of Origin Game I.

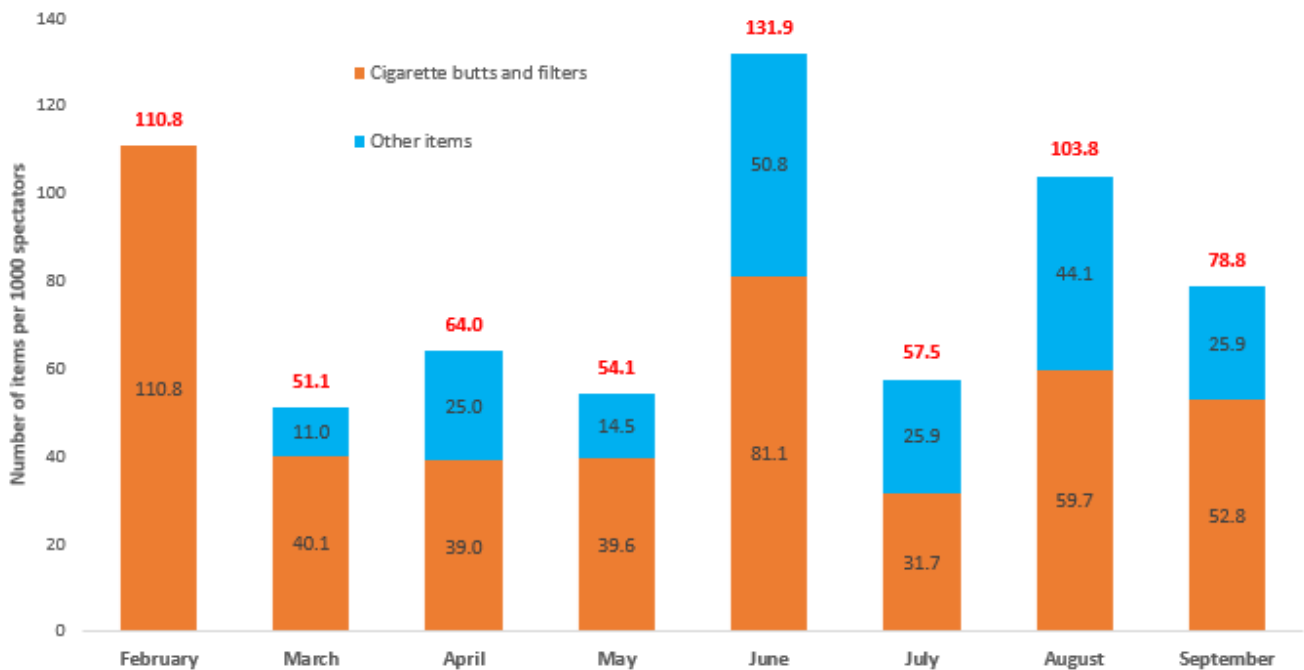


Figure 19 – Number of items collected during an event within each month relative to attendance (per 1000 spectators). Number in red denotes the overall total collected relative to attendance (note: there was no Litter Hero team present prior to March)

The Ditch the Flick and Litter Hero project are continuing at Queensland Country Bank Stadium during the 2022 NRL season.